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ABSTRACT

A satellite assisted, interactive teleconference titled "Networking for Interagency Collaboration" was evaluated to determine the effectiveness of the telecommunications mode in contrast to a central site mode. The conference background, goals, and content are described and two specific telecommunications goals are formally presented: 1) to demonstrate the need for and benefit of social service networks to increase the efficiency of service delivery, and 2) to have an impact on networking at the sites participating in the conference.A survey of participants indicated that teleconferencing, as an instructional format, helped them to learn new information and make new contacts, become aware of deficiencies in the current social service system, and take the first organizational steps in establishing formal, interagency networks. Participant views on the shortcomings of the telecommunication mode and observations on the mode's cost effectiveness are presented. (CJ)

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NETWORKING FOR INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

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A SATELLITE TELECONFERENCE EVALUATION

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EVALUATION REPORT

SATELLITE TELECONFERENCE ON NETWORKING FOR INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

James O. Carey

Larry Israelite

OVERVIEW

This evaluation was conducted to determine the effectiveness of a satellite assisted, interactive teleconference titled "Networking for Interagency Collaboration". The conference, sponsored by the Teacher Corps Youth Advocacy Loop, took place on October 25-26, 1979, and originated from the studios of the Public Service Satellite Consortium in Denver, Colorado. Nine sites representing the eleven Youth Advocacy Projects participated in the conference. Each site was directly linked to the Denver studio by telephone, thus providing for interaction among all participants and presentors.

The purpose of the conference was to provide training aimed at alleviating several of the problems related to the fragmented delivery of social services to troubled youth. The two major issues which were considered were (a) developing an awareness that there is duplication and overlap in both service delivery and reception, and (b) delineating the processes that are important for collaborative planning among human service agencies. These concerns resulted in two specific teleconference goals which were:

a. To demonstrate the need for and benefit of social service networks to increase the efficiency of service delivery.
b. To have an impact on networking at the sites participating in the conference.

Conference planners also wanted to determine the effectiveness of the teleconference format as a means of bringing a large number of people together for training and information sharing. The data used in this evaluation was gathered by means of pre- and post-conference participant questionnaires. Site facilitators also were questioned about each of the major group activities which occurred during the conference. Participants will be surveyed again during May of 1980 to determine the status of networking at that time, and to measure the long term effect of the conference.

Most conference participants recognize clearly the need for, and benefits of, networking for the improved delivery of services to troubled youth. It became apparent, however, that there are several hurdles which must be cleared before this goal can be accomplished.

First although agency personnel wish to collaborate (many do already), they don't have a sufficient number of contacts in other agencies, nor do they know enough about the mandates of other agencies. Second, and no less important, is the current perception of the role of the school in the delivery of social services to youth. At the present time, almost 50 percent of the school personnel don't view servicing troubled youth as a goal of their institution. It is also perceived that schools are difficult to work with, and that they don't seek the help of other agencies. The status of current networking efforts varies greatly from

agency to agency. Most of the networking which does occur is on an informal basis, and while some agencies barely network at all, others do so on a fairly regular basis. Finally, even though agency personnel recognize the potential value of collaborative planning, they do not find it a valuable activity in its present state. It is clear that an effort must be made to demonstrate that interagency collaboration can make the task of assisting troubled youth easier for all agencies, and for all personnel.

A complete answer to the question of whether the conference had an impact on networking at the local sites cannot occur until the follow-up survey is administered in May of 1980. By the conclusion of the conference, however, eight of the nine sites had a framework for a large formal network. Whether the networks continue to exist remains to be seen.

Teleconferencing, as an instructional format, proved to be very popular with conference participants. They enjoyed their ability to share ideas with each other, and found the interaction to be stimulating and thought provoking. There were two concerns which were expressed by participants about the interaction. First, they wanted more. It is recommended that the pure information presentations be replaced with more interactive sessions. Second, participants wanted the ability

to interact with sites other than Denver. This is a technical problem which can be overcome with the use of a different telephone hook-up.

Although this particular teleconference was expensive (approximately $97,000.00), many of the costs were attributable to the fact that this is the first teleconference planned by this group. It is estimated that a second teleconference could be held for $47,000.00. This figure is $19,000.00 less than the cost of participant travel alone to a central site. With the failure of budgets to keep pace with the rapidly increasing costs of travel, teleconferencing appears to be an attractive alternative to traditional conference practices.

The results of the teleconference were very positive. A valuable insight was gained into current patterns of networking in the local sites. Participants learned new information and made new contacts that will enable them to provide services for troubled youth more efficiently. Participants also became aware of deficiencies in the current social service system and took the first organizational steps required to establish formal, interagency networks. Finally, participants left the teleconference sites with positive attitudes about the role of networking and about the teleconference itself.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This evaluation was conducted to determine the effectiveness of a satellite-assisted, interactive television conference titled "Networking for Interagency Collaboration". The conference, sponsored by the Teacher Corps Youth Advocacy Loop, took place on October 25-26, 1979, and originated from the studios of the Public Service Satellite Consortium in Denver, Colorado.

There are several reasons why a comprehensive evaluation was thought to be necessary for the teleconference. First, this was the first large-scale teleconference conducted by Teacher Corps, and the agency was interested in how participants would accept the format, and in the cost-effectiveness of the format. Second, the Teacher Corps Youth Advocacy Loop was interested in how much impact the teleconference would have on the local sites that were linked via the television network. It is anticipated that this report will be useful in making future decisions about the use of teleconferencing in Teacher Corps and in other agencies.

Background of the Conference

The efficient delivery of appropriate services to youngsters in trouble is an exceedingly complex problem. The scarcity of resources is directly related to the inefficiency of their delivery and it seems the demand for service always exceeds the supply of resources. In part, this condition

prevails because many of those needing help come from multiple-problem families. Some receive services simultaneously from schools, probation, welfare, and public health; yet, those agencies are seldom in close communication. Stated succinctly, the problems of families needing services are interrelated, while the sources of help are fragmented among and, often, within agencies.

This condition persists because social service agencies have organized their programs into highly specialized, narrowly categorized units of service. As a result, members of the same family often receive services from more than one specialist in the same agency, with no single professional taking the responsibility for coordinating services for the total family. It is ironic that the people for whom services have been organized find themselves in the position of shopping around among highly specialized workers in the social service system. Yet, these specialists rarely communicate with each other about what should be done to help.

Problems associated with the inefficient delivery of appropriate services include:

- Individuals and families seeking services from community agencies have multiple problems requiring services from more than one social agency.
- The organization of service into narrowly categorized units tends to fragment resources.

- Agencies plan and operate their respective programs in isolation; consequently, there is little interagency collaboration.
- Professionals in the social service system do not take the responsibility for coordinating and integrating resources in response to client needs.

To provide training aimed at alleviating these problems, the Youth Advocacy Loop planned an interactive teleconference. The goal of the teleconference was to facilitate interagency collaboration in each of nine Youth Advocacy Project sites for the most efficient and effective delivery of human services to troubled youth. The two issues that were considered during the teleconference were: (a) developing an awareness that there is duplication and overlap in both service delivery and reception, and (b) delineating the processes that are important for collaborative planning among schools and human service agencies.

All eleven Youth Advocacy Projects received telecasts that originated from Denver, Colorado. The projects are located in Maine, Vermont, Alabama, Colorado, Texas, Georgia, West Virginia, Indiana, Michigan, Arizona, and Oregon. Nine sites were actually interconnected, because the Oregon project group met at the site in Colorado and the Alabama project group met at the site in Georgia. Table 1 contains a demographic description of all participants by site, agency, and job category.

The event occurred on October 25 and 26, 1979, and was telecast via satellite from Denver, Colorado, under the technical direction of the Public Service Satellite Consortium. Each participating site was linked directly to the Denver studio, thus providing for interaction among all participants and presentors. A brief description of the conference proceedings follows.

The conference began with an activity during which local agencies had the opportunity to learn more about each other. This was followed by a televised presentation on the concept of networking for interagency collaboration.

Table 1

Conference Participant Demographies
by Site, Type of Agency, and Job Category

Site*	Number of Participants	Type of Agency	Number of Participants
Colorado & Oregon	15	Education	59
Arizona	18	Juvenile Justice	16
Maine	16	Health Services	10
Michigan	11	Social Services	21
Georgia & Alabama	21	Government	4
Indiana	11	Other	12
Texas	15	Not Listed	2
Vermont	17		
		Total	124
Total	124		

Job Category	Number of Participants
Direct Contact	51
Supervisor	26
Policy Planning	17
Other	24
Not Listed	6
Total	124

*West Virginia pre-conference data is not included in this analysis.

A videotaped case study of a multi-problem child was then presented at each site. Participants were asked to develop both a short and long term plan for meeting the needs of the child in the case study. This activity concluded the first day of the conference.

The second day began with a televised interactive discussion among the sites about the case planning activity conducted the day before. A panel of experts responded to telephone comments and questions from the local sites concerning the previous day's case study planning session. After a second panel presentation titled "Implications for Social Planning, Training, and National Policy" and an additional presentation on networking, participants spent the remainder of the concluding day planning for the establishment of a local network. A detailed agenda of the conference is in Appendix A.

Goals of the Teleconference

There were three major purposes for the Teacher Corps

Youth Advocacy Loop Teleconference. The first purpose was to demonstrate clearly the need for, and benefits of, local and national social service agency networking for increased efficiency in meeting the needs of troubled youth. The second purpose was to determine whether a satellite teleconference is a viable means for training and information sharing among social service agencies throughout the United States. A third purpose was to have an impact on networking in the nine local sites that were represented at this conference. To accomplish these purposes, three goal areas were identified which formed the basis of conference activities and this evaluation.

1. Goal Area I: Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes About Networking

The first goal area of the teleconference was related to the overall concept of interagency networking of youth service agencies. The specific conference objectives related to this goal area were:

a. To provide participants with information about the purpose, structure, and function of local social service agency networks.

b. To provide networking experience through participation in a simulated network activity in which various agencies planned a program for a troubled youth.

c. To provide participants with specific information about the youth service agencies located in their own geographical area.

d. To improve participant attitudes towards the concept of networking for interagency collaboration.

2. Goal Area II: Teleconferencing As A Training Format

The second goal of the teleconference was to explore the suitability of the teleconference format for achieving the cognitive and affective goals of this type of educational activity. More specifically, the objectives of the teleconference in this area were to:

a. Compare the costs of the teleconference format with the traditional, central-site conference format.

b. Determine the acceptability of the teleconference format.

3. Goal Area III: Institutionalization of Networking

The third goal area of the teleconference was to have positive impact on the level of networking activities in the eleven Youth Advocacy sites. The specific objectives in this goal area were to:

a. Stimulate creation or continuation of formal youth service networks for interagency collaboration.

b. Increase collaborative planning for troubled youth among network members.

II. EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Evaluation Questions

Evaluation activities were organized according to the teleconference goals and objectives described in the preceding pages. For each of the three teleconference goal areas, specific evaluation questions were developed. The goal areas, and 12 evaluation questions, are listed in Table 2. Table 2 also includes the types and sources of data used to answer each evaluation question and the instruments used to collect the data. Later in this report, the results and discussion will be organized around the goal areas and evaluation questions found in Table 2.

Evaluation Methods

Instrumentation. The major part of the evaluation was conducted by means of questionnaires administered to participants prior to the first day's activities and at the end of the second day's activities. These data were supplemented by observation forms completed by each site facilitator, and by budget summaries provided by the Executive Secretary of the Youth Advocacy Loop. The questionnaires included three and five point Likert scale items, free response items, and a specially designed information grid for measuring the current level of networking activities. The facilitators' observation forms also included Likert scale, and free response items.

The instruments used in this evaluation are in Appendix B. One additional instrument that will be used is a survey designed to determine the status of and attitude toward networking six months after the teleconference at each of the sites participating in the teleconference.

the pre- and post-conference questionnaires were designed to assess participants' perceptions of networking and teleconferencing, and to establish baseline data concerning the level of interagency networking at each local site. The post-conference questionnaire alsc measured participants' perceptions of each conference activity, and the overall effect of the conference.

The facilitators' questionnaires were designed to provide the evaluators with an outsider's viewpoint of the manner in which site groups worked towards the accomplishment of individual conference activity objectives. These data were used to make decisions concerning the level of networking activity being demonstrated, the effectiveness of the group interaction, and the actual success of the conference in stimulating interagency collaboration for improved youth services.

Sample and Data Analysis. All participants in the teleconference were included in the sample for this study, as were each of the nine site facilitators. Data were analyzed by calculating the mean response score and the percentage of time that each response was given for every question.

Table 2

Evaluation Questions

GOAL AREA	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	TYPES AND SOURCES OF DATA	INSTRUMENTS
I. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes about networking	1. How effectively did the conference provide information about networking?	Perceptions of conference participants and site facilitators about the effectiveness of activities.	Likert scale ratings and free response questions on post conference questionnaire; observation checklist.
	2. How effectively did the conference provide simulated experience in networking?	Same as above.	Same as above.
	3. How effectively did the conference increase participants' knowledge about other agencies in each local site?	Same as above.	Same as above.
	4. How effectively did the conference promote positive attitudes about networking?	Pre- and post conference perceptions of conference participants and site facilitators about the value of networking.	Likert scale ratings and free response questions on pre- and post conference questionnaires.

Table 2

Evaluation Questions (continued)

GOAL AREA	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	TYPES AND SOURCES OF DATA	INSTRUMENTS
II. Teleconferencing as a training format	5. Was the teleconference well executed technically?	Perceptions of conference participants and site coordinators about the effectiveness of the teleconference format.	Likert scale ratings and free response questions on pre- and post-conference questionnaires.
	6. How well was the teleconference format accepted by participants?	Same as above.	Same as above.
	7. How do the costs of the teleconference format compare with costs for traditional conferences?	Comparisons between the teleconference budget and the budget for a hypothetical, single-site conference having the same goals and objectives.	

Table 2

Evaluation Questions (continued)

GOAL AREA	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	TYPES AND SOURCES OF DATA	INSTRUMENTS
III. Institutionalization of networking	8. What is the status of networking in the local sites at the time of the teleconference?	Reports by conference participants of number, type, and organization of networking activities.	Likert scale ratings, free response questions, and networking activities grid on pre-conference questionnaires.
	9. What are the perceptions of networking in the local sites at the time of the teleconference?	Perceptions of conference participants of value of and need for networking, knowledge of and contacts in other agencies.	Likert scale ratings and free response questions on conference questionnaires; site facilitator's observation checklist.
	10. What is the perceived role of the public schools in networking at the time of the teleconference?	Perceptions of conference participants.	Likert scale ratings on conference questionnaires.
	11. Six months after the teleconference, what are: (a) status of networking, (b) perceptions of networking, and (c) perceptions of the role of public schools in networking?	Same as questions 8, 9, and 10 above.	

Table 2

Evaluation Questions (continued)

GOAL AREA	EVALUATION QUESTIONS	TYPES AND SOURCES OF DATA	INSTRUMENTS
III. Institutionalization of networking	12. What was the impact of the teleconference on networking in the local sites?	Comparison between pre-, post-, and 6-month post-conference perceptions and status reports.	

For the purposes of the presentation and discussion of results, responses were categorized as either positive or negative. Responses which indicated no opinion were considered to be negative.

Data analysis revealed a very high response rate for all evaluation questionnaires. Over 85 percent of the participants responded to all questions, with the facilitator response rate approaching 100 percent.

Evaluation Standards. For some of the data collected in this evaluation there is no relevant standard of comparison, because they were collected for the purpose of establishing baseline information about the status of networking at the local sites. For the data on participants' ratings of teleconference activities, standards were considered. Because ratings were so uniformly high, the high ratings themselves became the standard. Ratings that were noticeably lower were considered "sub-standard" (arbitrarily set at a positive approval rate of less than 80 percent) and were scrutinized closely.

The standard of comparison in the question of teleconference costs was a simulated budget for a hypothetical single-site conference having the same goals and objectives.

III. RESULTS

All Conference Activities

Before addressing the results from each evaluation question, it will be useful to look at some general perceptions reported by participants. These perceptions are accompanied by very little comment at this point in the report, but will be referenced several times in the pages that follow.

Participants' general responses to each teleconference activity were collected on the following questions:

a. Was the activity interesting?
b. Were sufficient guidelines given to enable participation?
c. Was the activity relevant?
d. Was the time spent on the activity appropriate?

The percentage of positive participant responses to each of the questions for each conference activity is summarized in Table 3. In every case, at least 60 percent of the responses were positive with the highest percentage appearing for "Interest In Case Study Planning" and the lowest for the amount of time spent on "The Network Implications Panel".

Table 3

Participants' General Perceptions
Of Teleconference Activities In Percent

Activity	Interesting	Sufficient Guidelines	Relevancy	Time
Perception Checking	85.2*	93.9	88.5	78.1
Case Study Planning	93.2	80.0	86.1	73.2

Table 3

Participants' General Perceptions
Of Teleconference Activities In Percent (continued)

Activity	Interesting	Sufficient Guidelines	Relevancy	Time
Case Study Panel	63.3	82.0	65.8	60.8
Network Implications Panel	72.8	84.0	71.9	60.0
Network Plan Development	72.3	81.2	74.0	73.9

*Indicates percent of positive response

Goal Area I: Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes About Networking

Evaluation Question 1

Evaluation question one was designed to determine whether the information provided about networking during the conference was sufficient to facilitate participation in conference activities. Over 80 percent of the conference participants positively rated the information presentation portions of the five major conference activities. This figure slipped to only 64 percent for the Thursday morning presentation on networking by Anne Dosher.

Evaluation Question 2

One goal of the teleconference was to provide participants with the opportunity to engage in simulated networking activity. This was accomplished through the case study planning activity and the development of a site-specific network

plan. Participant attitudes towards these two activities are summarized below.

The case study planning activity was rated highly with over 85 percent of the participants responding in a positive manner. Only 71 percent thought that the collaborative planning resulted in a workable solution to the problem presented on the videotape.

The network planning activity was rated slightly lower. While 94 percent of the participants thought their groups worked well together, only 77 percent thought the experience resulted in positive steps toward the accomplishment of a formal interagency network. The responses of the site facilitators supported the views of the participants.

Evaluation Question 3

One of the major benefits of the teleconference was that it provided for the exchange of information among the participating agencies. One activity was designed specifically to facilitate this exchange. It was also anticipated that the group activities would increase the general flow of information among participants.

Only 71 percent of the participants thought they learned a lot of new information about other agencies during the agency perception check activity. They did, however, think it was relevant (88%) and interesting (85%). Eighteen percent also felt that more time on this activity would have been beneficial.

A pre- to post-conference comparison shows an increase in the percentage of participants who think they know enough about other agencies to plan with them. This figure grew from 54 percent before the conference to 61 percent on the last day.

These data also reflect a slight increase in the number of contacts participants have in other agencies. Prior to the conference only 47 percent of the participants thought they had enough, with this figure increasing to 58 percent after.

When the data gathered for evaluation question three is broken down according to institutional affiliation, a slightly different picture emerges. Participants representing educational institutions show much greater growth in this area than participants from other agencies.

On the question of knowledge about other agencies, educational personnel rose from 45.7 percent before the conference to 58 percent after. This represents an increase of almost 25 percent. This figure contrasts sharply with the 5 percent increase for participants representing other agencies.

An even more dramatic increase was noticed in the number of contacts school personnel have in other agencies. Showing a positive rating of 51.8 percent after the conference compared to 36.2 percent prior, this figure increased almost 40 percent during the two day event. The difference between pre- and post-conference ratings of individuals with other agency affiliations was just over 10 percent.

Evaluation Question 4

To determine the affect of the teleconference, a comparison was made between pre- and post-conference participant attitudes towards networking. Differences in these ratings could be attributed to conference activities. The data, however, revealed that over 90 percent of the participants had a positive attitude toward networking before the conference began, making any noticeable difference difficult to observe.

The one result which is of interest in this section is that after the conference only 77 percent of the participants indicated that their agencies would investigate networking as a means of improving services to troubled youth.

Goal Area II: Teleconferencing As A Training Format

Evaluation Question 5

The success of or failure of any teleconference can be affected greatly by its technical quality. In many instances, high quality content becomes meaningless because of poor audio or video signal, uncomfortable surroundings or any one of several technical problems related strictly to the television format. Evaluation question five was designed to determine the technical quality of this teleconference.

The quality of the television picture and sound, and the physical arrangements were rated very highly by both participants and facilitators. Over 95 percent responded positively

to sound and picture with over 80 percent indicating satisfaction with the physical arrangements.

The use of the telephone was also considered in this section. Seventy-five percent of the participants thought the phone increased the value of the panel discussions. At the same time, however, many comments were made which indicated frustration with the telephone hook-ups. Participants found the phones difficult to use and experienced great difficulty when trying to reach Denver. Participants also regretted their inability to contact sites other than Denver to discuss points which were raised during several conference activities.

Evaluation Question 6

Once it has been determined that the technical aspects of a teleconference were not problematic, the question of affect takes on great importance. Participants should not only think a conference is technically well executed, but should believe that the format was appropriate as well. Evaluation question six was intended to provide information on this important consideration.

Participants were asked, prior to the conference, to indicate whether they thought the teleconference would be a good way to present information on networking. Seventy-two percent thought it would be. After the conference participants were asked the same question, and the positive response rate rose to 83 percent, an increase of approximately 15 percent.

Participants were also asked to state whether they thought the teleconference was a good substitute for a more traditional face-to-face conference. Sixty-nine percent thought that it was, while another 17 percent indicated indecision.

Several free response questions on the post conference questionnaire provided participants with the opportunity to discuss what they thought were the weaknesses of the use of television in this conference, and weaknesses of the conference in general. The responses which appeared most often are summarized below.

Many participants felt that many of the content presentations could have been videotaped, mailed to the sites, and played locally. It was felt that only those which included direct interaction should have originated from the Denver site.

As stated earlier, participants were also frustrated by the phone hook-up. They had trouble getting through, and wanted the capability to interact with sites other than Denver. More use of the phones after Anne Dosher's presentation and after the case study activity also appeared desirable.

Participants were asked to indicate what they liked most about the conference. Those characteristics of teleconferencing which make it a desirable format were mentioned several times. Participants enjoyed the interaction, liked being in touch with other sites across the country, and thought the bringing together of many experts to a single location was a

very good use of meeting time. Participants also thought it valuable to learn about other people throughout the country who were encountering and working with similar, if not identical, problems.

Evaluation Question 7

The purpose of this question was to determine how the cost of the teleconference compared with the cost of more traditional face-to-face conferences. This comparison will provide the information needed to determine if the use of the television medium is a cost effective means of conducting a conference.

Table 4 contains a summary of the costs involved in this teleconference broken down into five major categories, some of which contain subcategories. The total cost of the conference was $97,749.

To compare the cost of this conference to a traditional conference several assumptions were made. First, it was assumed that all the planning that went into this conference would also have been required if the conference were in the traditional format. Only the Phoenix facilitators' meeting was excluded from this calculation. It was assumed that facilitator training would have occurred at the conference site during the two days preceding the beginning of the conference rather than weeks before at a different location.

Second, all methods of documentation were viewed as

Table 4

Costs of Teleconference By Category

Personnel		$31,485
Loop Staff	$20,000	
Consultants	11,485	
Travel		30,732
Planning	22,403	
Conference	8,329	
Materials		25,216
Conference Materials	10,008	
Collage	3,000	
Montage	1,208	
Monograph	10,000	
Slide/tape	1,000	
Communications		661
Conference		
Other		9,655
PSSC Charges	6,090	
Site Costs	3,565	
TOTAL		$97,749

existing regardless of the conference format. This includes the collage, montage, slide/tape, and monograph. Finally, it was assumed that the traditional conference would have been held in Denver and that an average of 16 participants would have represented each site.

The cost of transporting 16 participants from each of the 10 sites to Denver and housing and feeding them for two and one-half days is approximately $65,100. When this figure is added to the cost of the teleconference less those costs which were directly related to the television format, an extimate of the cost of a conventional conference results. This cost analysis is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

Teleconference - Traditional Conference Cost Comparison

Cost of Teleconference	$ 97,749
Television Format Related Cost	-20,570
	$ 77,179
Cost of Transporting and Housing 16 Participants Per Site	+66,100
Total Traditional Conference Estimated Costs	$143,279
Cost of Teleconference	-97,749
Savings	$ 45,530

The television format, when compared to a traditional conference, resulted in a savings of approximately $45,500.

This figure does not reflect the additional cost of facilitator training, which, when added, increases the savings to almost $47,000.

A second way of viewing the preceding cost comparison is to compute the number of participants who could have attended a traditional conference in Denver using the $20,500 that was spent specifically for television related activities. With an average cost of $407 for transportation and per diem for one participant from any site, 50 individuals could have attended a conventional conference in Denver. Thus participation in a conventional conference would have been limited to five representatives from each site (Teacher Corps Director, group facilitator and three agency representatives), whereas participation in the teleconference averaged 16 per site (Teacher Corps Director, group facilitator, and 14 agency representatives).

Goal Area III: Institutionalization of Networking

The purpose of investigation in this goal area was to develop a picture of the status of networking in each of the local sites at the time of the teleconference. Both pre- and post-conference measures were included for this status study. A six-month post-conference follow-up will be conducted in April, 1980. The data from the post-conference follow-up will be compared with the information reported below to give an indication of whether the concepts and skills covered in the

teleconference are being institutionalized in the local sites. That report will be available by the end of May, 1980.

Evaluation Question 8

Evaluation question eight concerns the status of networking in the local sites. The information of interest is whether networks exist and, if so, which agencies are most active.

Do networks exist? Networking in the local sites exists at several levels: interpersonal, informal interagency, and formal interagency. At the interpersonal level, 55 percent of participants frequently collaborate with other agencies in planning social services for youth. An additional 39 percent occasionally collaborate, and only 5 percent responded that they never collaborate. This active level of interpersonal networking contrasts sharply with participants' responses about informal and formal interagency networking. Of the 124 participants, 40 percent responded that an interagency network exists in their community, and 27 percent responded that the network is formalized. Excluding Orono, Maine, at least three participants at each site indicated that a formal network exists. Thus, networking exists at all three levels in most sites, but the majority of participants were not aware of its existence or were from agencies not represented in a network. Participants representing educational agencies perceived the existence of networks at approximately the same rate as those representing other agencies. However, partici-

pants having different job roles perceived the amount and type of networking differently. Table 6 indicates that policy planners perceive themselves as being more active in collaboration with other agencies, but do not perceive the existence of a network as frequently as supervisors, or those who have direct contact with clients.

Table 6

Amount and Type of Networking by Job Role

Questions		Job Roles		
		Client Contact	Supervisor	Policy Planner
I collaborate with other agencies:	Never	2%	8%	0%
	Occasionally	40%	44%	24%
	Frequently	58%	48%	76%
There is an interagency network in my community:	Yes	41%	57%	34%
	No	59%	43%	66%
The network is formally constituted:	Yes	38%	33%	42%
	No	62%	67%	58%

One final note about the existence of networks is that at the end of the teleconference, participants in eight of the nine sites agreed to meet again to continue the interagency communication fostered during the teleconference. The participants in the ninth site agreed that the network already in existence in their site was sufficiently strong to facilitate interagency planning and case study. Thus, by the end of the teleconference, at least the framework existed in all sites for a formal network that included representatives from a variety of social service agencies.

How are different agencies involved in networking? The question of how agencies are involved in networking was analyzed in three ways: (a) whether contacts between agencies were for policy planning or case planning, (b) the relative amount of activity of different agencies in networking, and (c) the patterns of interagency contact.

The 124 participants were asked to name the other agencies with which they collaboratively set policy or plan casework. Of the 523 agency contacts cited, 19 percent were for policy planning and 81 percent were for case planning. If agencies maintain contact with one another, it is most likely for the purpose of case planning.

The relative amount of activity of different agencies is displayed in Table 7.

Table 7

Networking Linkages by Agency Affiliation

	Type of Agency				
	Education	Social Service	Juvenile Justice	Nonprofit, Government & Other	Health Services
Total number of interagency linkages cited	213	157	89	33	31
Total number of planning contacts per month with other agencies	379	359	63	65	2
Number of teleconference participants who network	43*	24	12	11	5

Table 7

Networking Linkages by Agency Affiliation (continued)

	Type of Agency				
	Education	Social Service	Juvenile Justice	Nonprofit, Government & Other	Health Services
Average number of interagency links per participant (A÷C)	5.0	6.5	7.4	3.0	3.1
Average number of planning contacts per month per participant (B÷C)	8.8	15.0	5.3	5.9	0.4

*Percent positive response

The reports of those present at the conference indicate that juvenile justice agencies maintain the highest average number of linkages with other agencies, followed by social service and education. The table also shows that representatives of social service agencies are almost twice as active in networking as representatives of education, and almost three times as active as the representatives from the other agencies listed. Table 7 should be interpreted cautiously, however, for it depicts only the networking activity of the individuals attending the teleconference.

Table 8 shows the number of linkages each major agency has with the other agencies represented at the conference. Although no particular patterns emerge from this data, it

is interesting to note that three agencies have their highest number of linkages with social service agencies. At the same time few agencies have more than 20 percent of their links with the health service, juvenile justice or non-profit, government or other agencies.

Table 8

Pattern of Interagency Linkages

Type of Agency	Total Number of Linkages Cited	Percent of Linkages by Agencies				
		Education	Social Service	Juvenile Justice	Health Services	Nonprofit, Government & Other
Educa-tion	213	30%	31%	12%	11%	15%
Social Service	157	24%	28%	15%	20%	13%
Juvenile Justice	89	21%	21%	19%	12%	26%
Health Service	31	23%	39%	13%	10%	16%
Nonprofit, Government, and Other	33	27%	15%	27%	15%	15%

NOTE: Some percentages do not total 100% because of rounding to the nearest whole number.

Table 9 shows how each agency divides the total number of planning contacts per month among other agencies. Of particular interest on this table is the relationship between

education and social service agencies. Education personnel indicated that 29 percent of their contacts each month were with social service agencies. At the same time, however, social service agencies stated that only 18 percent of their contacts are with education agencies. Also of interest is the relatively low percentage of contacts per month that most agencies have with health services.

Table 9

Pattern of Networking Activity

Type of Agency	Total Number of Planning Contacts Per Month With Other Agencies	Percent of Contacts Per Month by Agency				
		Education	Social Service	Juvenile Justice	Health Services	Nonprofit, Government & Other
Education	379	48%	29%	7%	4%	11%
Social Service	359	18%	19%	24%	14%	25%
Juvenile Justice	63	17%	17%	37%	8%	21%
Health Service	2	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%
Nonprofit, Government, and Other	65	38%	15%	23%	20%	3%

NOTE: Some percentages do not total to 100% because of rounding to the nearest whole number.

Finally, a comparison between Table 8 and Table 9 indicates that even though representatives of health service agencies cited contacts with 31 other agencies, they reported that they actually plan collaboratively only twice per month.

Evaluation Question 9

The purpose of this question was to determine the perception of networking in the local sites at the time of the teleconference. These data were gathered by having participants rate the effectiveness of existing networks and state whether networking activities should be increased. Participants were also asked to indicate whether they knew enough about other agencies to effectively work with them and if they had a sufficient number of contacts in agencies with which they might work. The data cited in the following paragraphs are summarized in Table 10.

Table 10

Perceptions of the Value of Networking in Percents

		Type of Agency		Job Role		
	Overall	Education	Others	n=5 Policy Planner	n=13 Supervisor	n=19 Client Contact
Helped joint planning	58*	59.1	57.1	60	53.8	73.7
Eliminates overlaps and fills in gaps	32	27.3	35.7	0	38.5	36.8

Table 10

Perceptions of the Value of Networking in Percents (continued)

		Type of Agency		Job Role		
	Overall	Education	Others	n=5 Policy Planner	n=13 Supervisor	n=19 Client Contact
Effective in planning casework	30	31.8	28.6	0	15.4	57.9
Improved overall quality	52	36.4	64.29	20	46.1	63.2

*Percent of positive response

Those participants who responded that an interagency network exists were asked additional questions about its effectiveness. Of the 50 participants who indicated the existence of a network, 58 percent reported that the network had helped to establish joint planning activities with other agencies. Only 32 percent indicated that the network had worked effectively to eliminate overlap and fill gaps in services, and 30 percent believed the network to be effective in planning casework. Finally, 52 percent of the respondents reported that the activities of the network had improved the quality of the total social service program in their city. Eight of the 22 respondents (36 percent) from education believed networking had improved social services, while 18 of the 25 respondents (64 percent) from other agencies believed that

it had.

When these data are broken down according to respondent job classification, a very interesting pattern emerges. Policy planners have a much lower opinion of networking than either direct service workers or supervisors. No policy planners thought that networks work effectively to eliminate overlaps and fill gaps or that networks are effective in specific case review and planning. For direct service workers, these figures are 16.7 percent and 27.5 percent respectively. Twenty-five percent of the supervisors thought that networking eliminates overlaps and fills gaps, while only 10 percent thought networking is effective for review and planning.

Supervisory personnel also appear to have a lower regard for the degree to which networking has helped to establish joint planning among agencies and whether it has improved the quality of the total social service program in each local site. For both of these questions, policy planners responded in the affirmative approximately 35 percent of the time. For the other two groups, positive response levels ranged from 50 percent to 57 percent.

Over 90 percent of the participants agreed that networking is a valuable tool for policy and case planning and that the current level of collaboration among agencies should be increased. In contrast to these findings, even at the conclusion of the conference, the level of knowledge about and

contacts in other agencies was not very high. Only 6 percent of the participants thought they knew enough about other agencies and only 58 percent felt they had sufficient contacts.

An even more interesting indicator of current attitudes towards networking can be seen when these data are broken down according to the institutional affiliation of the respondent. As reported under evaluation question three, the level of knowledge and number of contacts differs depending on the type of agency being represented.

Evaluation Question 10

The role of the public schools in the development of networking activity is of interest for several reasons. First, they are the agencies with which youth have the most contact between the ages of six and seventeen. As a result, the school should be in a very advantageous position to coordinate youth services. The second reason is that almost half of the participants in this teleconference represented educational institutions of various levels. Finally, one mandate of the Teacher Corps Youth Advocacy Loop, the conference sponsor, is to determine the extent to which schools currently serve troubled youth. Participants were asked to respond to several related questions:

a. Whether the schools feel it is their role to help troubled youth

b. Whether other agencies think a role of the schools is to serve troubled youth

c. Whether schools are easy to work with

d. Whether schools seek the help of other agencies in working with troubled youth.

Table 11 summarizes the percent of positive response of individuals from education agencies and those from all other agencies combined for each of the four questions listed above.

Table 11

Perceptions of the School's Role in the Treatment of Troubled Youth

	Education Agencies	Other Agencies
a. Schools see role is to help youth:	51.4*	27.7
b. Others see role of schools to help youth:	60.3	58.4
c. Schools easy to work with:	41.4	24.6
d. Schools seek help from other agencies:	39.7	35.2

*Percent of positive response

Slightly over 51 percent of the school personnel think that educational institutions perceive serving troubled youth as one of their roles. Of the personnel in other agencies, only 27.7 percent think schools perceive this as one of their roles.

The question of whether outside agencies think schools

should serve troubled youth reflected much more consistent results. For school personnel the positive response rate was 60.3 percent with the figure dropping only slightly to 58.4 percent for personnel from other agencies.

The question of whether schools are easy to work with once again leads to rather inconsistent results. Approximately 41 percent of those who work in the schools think they are an easy institution with which to work. Individuals who work with rather than for schools responded positively only 24.6 percent of the time.

There seems to be general agreement about whether schools seek the help of other agencies for working with troubled youth. Slightly under 40 percent of the school personnel, and just over 35 percent of the other agency workers, thought schools do look elsewhere for help.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation was conducted to determine the effectiveness of a satellite-assisted interactive television conference titled, "Networking for Interagency Collaboration", which was sponsored by the Teacher Corps Youth Advocacy Loop. The conference took place on October 25-26, 1979, and originated from the studios of the Public Service Satellite Consortium in Denver, Colorado.

There are several distinct role groups that are interested in the results of this study. They range from the Teacher Corps leadership in Washington, D.C., to the actual conference participants. The results are of special interest to the Youth Development Task Group of the Youth Advocacy Loop and to the Far West Teacher Corps Network, which is currently planning a satellite teleconference.

This section will consist of a general discussion of the results of each evaluation goal area and recommendations in three areas: (a) how teleconferencing might be successfully used again, (b) what changes might be made in the format to make it more effective and efficient, and (c) what might be profitable approaches to increasing interagency collaboration in the local sites.

Goal Area I: Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes About Networking

The conference activities which appeared to be most interesting and relevant to participants were those in which interaction occurred. Participants felt that many of the purely informational presentations could have been made just as well on videotape and viewed by the sites on an individual basis.

An interesting, and perhaps more effective, alternative might be to prepare packets containing much of the information presented at the conference and use the satellite time for more interaction. Participants might ask questions or engage in activities in which those at the central site could participate. In either case, a future teleconference might be better if the straight presentation of information were limited.

Results from evaluation question two, although very positive, show some participant frustration with the lack of conclusive results in the simulated networking activities. In all cases the activities were perceived as being important, but the products which resulted were less than optional. This problem could be easily overcome by structuring participant activities more carefully and by showing participants concrete examples of the products they are trying to create.

The teleconference left no doubt that the level of knowledge agencies have about each other is severely lacking.

This is especially true among participants representing educational agencies, with almost 40 percent believing they don't have enough knowledge of other agencies and over 50 percent believing they lack sufficient contacts with other agency personnel. It is clear that an attempt should be made to reduce these two deficits.

One goal of the conference was to improve participant attitudes towards networking for interagency collaboration. The data revealed that there was little room for improvement; attitudes were highly positive before the conference ever began. However, the opportunity for intra- and inter-site confirmation of this attitude was probably quite valuable. Because the positive attitude already exists, the direction which further networking related educational activities take should be in the area of skill building and developing administrative support systems which will actively encourage and promote collaborative efforts in serving troubled youth.

One result which was of particular interest given the high degree of support for networking at all sites was that 23 percent of the participants stated they would not investigate networking as a means of improving youth services. When scrutinized a little more closely, this figure can be easily explained. At the conclusion of the conference, one site (Maine) decided not to meet formally as a network. Their

reason was not that they didn't see the value, but rather, that they already had a successful informal network and wanted it to continue. Preconference data also revealed that a small number of participants were already satisfied with the networks that existed in their sites. These two pieces of information probably account for the 23 percent negative response to the question on the further investigation of the use of networking activity.

Goal Area II: Teleconferencing As A Training Format

With the exception of the telephone problems cited earlier in this report, the technical aspects of the conference were excellent. Audio and video transmissions were crisp and clear, and the facilities at each of the sites were more than satisfactory. The call-in feature of the conference was important and should be improved before the next conference of this type. A system for a group conference call (such as the Kellogg System) would enable all sites to be linked by phone and should enhance the interactive portions of a future conference.

The teleconference itself was very popular with participants: 83 percent indicated that it was a good way to present information on networking. At the same time, however, only 69 percent stated the teleconference was a good substitute for a more conventional conference. Some possible explanations for these findings follow.

Although participants generally liked the conference format, they did identify things that they thought were more successful than others. They enjoyed the interaction it provided, liked being in contact with other people from all over the country, and valued the concentration of experts in one location. In short, participants recognized the specific characteristics of teleconferencing that made it valuable.

Participants also recognized the format's limitations. For example, they did not favor conference activities which were purely informational in nature. Live presentations of this type tend to be more stimulating and effective. They also recognized that having experts on hand provides more structure and more feedback on activities than only being able to ask a few questions via telephone.

There are several alternative methods by which the presentation of information could have been conducted. Information packets, prepared by the content consultants well in advance of the conference, might have been mailed to all conference participants. They, in turn, would have come to the conference with the basic knowledge required for participating in many of the activities. Transmission time could have been used for extended interaction periods, detailed structuring of site activities, presentation of model conference activity outcomes, and direct feedback to participants about their work.

This approach to utilizing the particular characteristics of the interactive television format might have resulted in more efficient and effective use of conference time. Even if it were not practical to mail packets to participants prior to a teleconference, it might be possible to hand out packets at the conference sites and include worksheets so that participants can participate actively. If linked by a conference call telephone network, the participants at all sites could even by surveyed for their attitudes or for status of activities in their sites. Information collected in this manner could be reported back instantly and used as input for discussion, commentary, or for guiding conference presentations.

This was an expensive conference no matter how it is viewed. Even so, it was less expensive than a conventional conference of equivalent size. At the same time, it was much more expensive than a second teleconference planned by the same group would be.

A significant amount of the conference cost was spent on planning ($35,500). It is very easy to conclude that a subsequent conference would not require as much planning. This was the first conference of its kind by this agency, and its success was crucial; thus, the heavy planning emphasis. Another factor related to planning is that much of what was reported in planning expenses was actually a combination of

logistical planning and development of a cohesive approach to networking. That is, the conference planners were designing more sophisticated approaches to the question of how one develops a social services network. Planning for this conference was thus very content centered. If future conferences did not require this content planning, the planning component would be far less costly.

Extensive documentation, evaluation, and dissemination costs ($15,000) were included in the budget for many of the same reasons as the extensive planning. The Youth Advocacy Loop wanted to carefully document the conference activities so others could see how it worked, what it did, and whether teleconferencing should be used more frequently in coming years.

In conclusion, three important points should be made. First, if a more normal amount of planning, documentation, and evaluation went into a second teleconference, it would cost almost $50,000 less than this one. Second, the total cost of a second teleconference ($47,000) could be less than the cost of participant travel alone to a central site ($66,000). Third, without television, a conference of this scale would never have occurred because of travel costs and the inability of agencies to free personnel from regular job responsibilities. With the failure of budgets to keep pace with the rapidly increasing cost of travel, teleconferencing presents a very

useful alternative to traditional conference practices.

Goal Area III: Institutionalization of Networking

Networking does exist, but mostly on the informal level. At least a small, formal network existed in all local sites prior to the teleconference, but most teleconference participants were not involved. By the end of the teleconference, eight of the nine sites had a framework for a larger, formal network.

An important follow-up to the teleconference could be work by the Teacher Corps project in each local site to ensure that this positive beginning does not die of lack of support. For development of networking in locations not involved in the teleconference, a productive approach might be for public school personnel to identify and seek participation in the small networks that already exist in most urban areas.

Another approach to expanding networking might be to aim efforts at high level administrators. They collaborate more than any other job role group, but don't see their efforts as networking. Public schools might take the lead in organizing these already active collaborators into more formalized groups, and then building participation downward to include supervisory and client contact personnel. On the other hand, the greatest volume of contact between agencies is for informal case planning among client contact personnel. A parallel approach to

institutionalization may then be to build up activity at this level until decisions about networking are forced at higher levels.

Although the impetus for this teleconference was from educators (Teacher Corps), social service agencies are the most active group in networking. Social service agencies emerge as the "hub" of networking activity, doing more business with a balanced representation of other agencies. One of the quickest routes to a broader networking for public schools might be to "buy into" the activities of the social service agencies. About half of education agencies' contacts are with other education agencies, a very inward-looking pattern. Conversely, social service agencies' patterns of contacts are evenly distributed among all agencies. If a goal of networking is to coordinate services from all agencies, then education agencies must broaden their perspective. Health service agencies are involved least in networking and should be targeted more heavily for inclusion.

There is over 90 percent agreement that networking, in theory, is valuable and that the current level of collaboration should be increased. In contrast, perceptions of the value of current networking efforts were quite low, ranging from 30 percent to 58 percent positive ratings; and perceptions of sufficient knowledge and contact for effective networking were low, ranging from 58 percent to 61 percent positive ratings.

Thus, the climate for change seems quite good, because participants perceive their capabilities for networking and the effectiveness of current networking efforts to be far below the level that they would like to see. Now is an appropriate time for expanding training and development of networking.

Perceptions of networking differ across agencies. Educators' perceptions of the value of networking are far less positive than the perceptions of other agency representatives. To understand this difference, an investigation would need to be undertaken into qualitative differences in networking experiences among different agencies. Perceptions of the value of current networking activities are uniformly low across job roles, but vary somewhat according to the role; i.e., planners think it helps in planning, supervisors in filling service gaps, and case workers in case planning. Institutionalization might be fostered by educating those in different job roles (particularly top level) about the value of networking at different levels.

Data gathered about the role of the schools in serving troubled youth resulted in the following somewhat surprising conclusions:

a. In general, school personnel do not see the delivery of services to troubled youth as one of their goals nor do they think personnel of other youth service agencies see that as a role of the school.

b. Both of these attitudes are echoed by other agency personnel.

c. Neither school nor other agency personnel think schools are easy to work with or that they seek the help of other youth service agencies.

In light of these conclusions, the current fragmentation in the provision of youth services is not surprising. The specific agency in which young people spend a major portion of their time is not structured to help them. Collaboration among the schools and other agencies is limited, at least in part, because schools are perceived as being difficult to work with, and not seeking the help of other agencies. Perhaps the most serious deficiency here is public education's perception that they do not have a role in helping troubled youth. Until this perception changes, there is probably little potential for drawing the schools into extended collaboration with social service agencies.

What, then, are the implications of these data for future networking efforts? Certainly, an attempt must be made to open the lines of communication among the schools and other agencies. The role of the schools in the delivery of youth services must also be clarified. Finally, and perhaps most important, an effort must be made to demonstrate how interagency collaboration can make the task of assisting troubled youth easier for all agencies, schools to health services, and for all personnel, direct contact workers to policy planners.